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BOOK REVIEWS

Beginnings of the American People. By Carl Lotus Becker. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company (the Riverside Press), 1915. Pp. 279.

A preface sufficiently modest suggests the treatment by each author of that part of the story which the plan of the publishers required him to prepare. The first of the four attractive volumes which make up this new history of the United States contains the best account of the extension of geographical knowledge to be found in any college text book known to the reviewer. But admirable though it is in matter and in form a few topics have been omitted, the consideration of which would contribute to completeness of outline. The zeal of Irish missionaries, who visited and for a time dwelt in Iceland as well as the enterprise of Norsemen, who came to America, if not suitable themes for discussion, should at least have been noticed. While these achievements, so far as is now known, had nothing to do with the Columbian discovery of America, it is well to inform the student that though the nations on the Mediterranean were the leaders in trade and navigation, yet there was enterprise in regions more remote and not a little geographical information in countries generally believed to have been backward.

In any account of the discovery of America it is important to remember that on January 6, 1492, when Granada surrendered, Columbus, as we learn from his *Journal*, was an interested spectator of that great event. If, in obedience to the command of Isabella, he had made the long journey to Santa Fé, it is certain that Her Majesty had resolved to equip the expedition of discovery *before* the surrender. It is well known that the mule which Columbus rode and the raiment that he wore on that occasion were the gifts of the Queen.

Having, under the terms of the agreement, furnished one-eighth of the cost of the expedition, the share of Columbus in any profits was to have been, not a *tithe*, as stated in this volume, but an eighth. Though this is a minor point, it counts for accuracy. Furthermore, the details of the equipment of this memorable expedition are not generally understood by even professional students of American history. Wherever it is practicable,

the conclusions of history should be as reliable as those of sciences more exact.

It is evident that the author is reading into the history of the pre-Columbian period ideas that are comparatively modern. In this part of his narrative the emphasis is placed on the profits of commerce as the major force influencing not only the first voyage of Columbus, but the earlier activity of Prince Henry and others interested in exploration. In his *Journal*, Columbus records the following sentiment: "Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and Princes, loving the Holy Christian faith and the spreading of it, and enemies of the sect of Mohamet and of all idolatries and heresies, decided to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the said regions of India, to see the said Princes and the people and lands, and to learn of their disposition, and of everything, and the measures which could be taken for their conversion to our Holy Faith; and you ordered that I should not go to the east by land, by which it is customary to go, but by way of the west, whence until today we do not know certainly that any one has gone. . . ." From the pages of Major and others we know that Prince Henry's interest was sustained by similar non-economic motives.

Professor Becker well says that in exchange for their gold and silver, "Spain imposed upon the natives of America an enlightened despotism and the benefits of a Christian civilization." He should have added that the good intentions of the Spanish monarchs were of little value to the Indian, for the greedy merchant class lay in wait to exploit him.

From the author's sketch of the rise of Puritanism the student can hardly fail to conclude that outside its membership there was in England little virtue or little genuine culture. As a matter of fact, the virtue of that era was engrossed by no church, while its culture was chiefly found in the Established Church and in what was left of the older church. In the realms of literature, indeed, one thinks of Milton, one of the most versatile as well as one of the greatest English men of letters, of the satirist Marvel, who had a turn for politics and pastorals, and of the inspired tinker Bunyan. To some readers these men of genius appear to have been separated by a wide interval from Sidney, Lyly, Spenser, Southwell, Jonson, Daniel, Lodge, Shakespeare, Crashawe, Her-

bert, Habington, Hobbes, Hooker and others. If it is true that the Puritans lived in a spiritual world, it is not less certain that there yet survived in its purer atmosphere rum to be consumed, and in America Indians to be defrauded, Catholics to be vilified, and Quakers to be hanged. All the effects of its fanaticism have not yet passed into nothingness. This section also includes an interesting narrative showing the decline of Puritanism as well as an enumeration of the forces which contributed to its disintegration. If one cannot perfectly agree with every statement of the author, one must acknowledge that he has a good grasp of events of that epoch and a clear insight into the elemental forces of its society. Remote as were the different settlements, it is evident from his narrative that the isolated communities of the wilderness were beginning to get into rather close contact with the intellectual life of the mother country.

The account of Pennsylvania, while making mention of the purchase of the three lower counties on the Delaware, fails to notice the somewhat significant fact that the same territory had long before been granted by Charles I to Lord Baltimore, a transaction which shows the less admirable side of Penn's character. The Duke of York, afterward King James II, it has never been the fashion of historians to praise.

While Parkman's writings are named in the bibliographical note appended to Chapter IV, one receives from the summary of Professor Becker a different impression of French achievement in the New World from that which one gains by a perusal of *The Jesuits in North America*. The word Jesuit appears to have become a common noun, primarily denoting a talent for intrigue. The phrase is "unscrupulous intrigue," though it is probable that no intrigue is every perfectly scrupulous. The author has read much, but he does not appear to have traveled far in the realms of that fine body of literature which treats of the Catholic missions and missionaries of America. To assert that Canada was little more than "a musket, a rosary, and a pack of beaver skins," an opinion that is quoted, is hardly good history and in literary merit is scarcely equal to "a bracelet of bright hair about the bone," a vivid verse of Donne. Whatever may be said of the methods of the French in dealing with the Indians, the natives were

not extirpated in those regions where men of that cultured nation were influential. It is only from those parts of the mainland of the New World colonized by the English that the aboriginal inhabitants have nearly disappeared.

One would expect to find in the section on settlement a brief sketch of the first two Lords Baltimore and at least a word concerning the province which they established. The history of Maryland being at once interesting and instructive, one is surprised to find the deeds of those enlightened gentlemen overlooked in any outline of our colonial history. It is true that the facts of Maryland history somewhat mar the fair picture of Puritanism elsewhere drawn by the author. His description of religious conditions in eighteenth century America, thoroughly Protestant in tone, is animated and brilliant. In fact the first as well as the three remaining volumes of this work is made up of well written essays. This plan has, it is true, the merit of making history entertaining, but, short of a *tour de force*, not every important topic can be put into the procrustean bed which is the characteristic of that literary form.

The causes of the American Revolution are adequately described or suggested. But the military history of the conflict, by design but an outline, does not even enumerate the forces that won the war. This subject, in itself exceedingly instructive, is but little known to the average American college graduate. The war, beginning in 1779, between Spain and Great Britain by giving employment to the troops of the empire, to a part of England's navy, and to some of her German auxiliaries was not without influence on the victory at Yorktown and the acquisition of the Mississippi Valley. The assistance received from the French of the Illinois country as well as from the Spaniards of the Gulf is not even alluded to. Nor is there any account of the relations of Holland to the struggle.

The date usually assigned for the voyage of Verrazzano is 1524 instead of 1534. "Hampden Court" is printed for Hampton Court. Doubtless these slips will disappear in a second edition. The author has adopted the traditional opinion concerning Captain John Smith, an estimate that is hardly critical.

Union and Democracy, by Allen Johnson, a volume slightly

larger than the preceding, and the second of this series, is, on the whole, little more than a thrice-told tale. Carefully, though not slavishly following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the author has given a reliable account of that part of American history between the treaty of Paris and the election of John Quincy Adams. The importance of the West, with its new democracy, is, indeed, properly given more prominence than is usual in college histories of the United States, while the final chapter, which deals with the rise of Federal sovereignty, contains in a few paragraphs an excellent summary of those opinions of Chief Justice Marshall which set the example of a "loose construction" of the Constitution, making it for the American people an abundant source of content, prosperity and greatness.

Expansion and Conflict, by William E. Dodd, the third volume of this series, is an interesting narrative describing the events of the two score years from 1825 to 1865. A reviewer needs no microscopic eyes to perceive in the history of those eventful years a number of great gaps. There is not, for example, so much as a single sentence alluding to the American claims against Mexico and their not very honorable management by our Government. The omission of a subject so important is not the ideal method of writing history, but is rather adapted to the requirements of the banquet hall and the holiday celebration. If there is a blot on the national escutcheon, it should be known in order that such offenses against international comity may not be repeated. So often and so generously has our great Republic encouraged and sustained afflicted humanity that it need not fear to acknowledge an act of aggression committed while its affairs were controlled by the slave power.

Though the frontispiece suggests that Lincoln was the grand personality of the decades covered by Professor Dodd, little is said of his endeavor to save the Union. So far as he had in advance considered any policy for his first administration, it was concerned with the Border States. Permanently to prevent their joining the Confederacy, he proposed to the people of that section a plan for the emancipation of slaves with compensation to their owners. This rejected offer is important because of its connection with the military emancipation announced in Septem-

ber, 1862. It is the first stage in his later purpose to free the slaves as a military measure.

Nothing is said of Lincoln's effort, through Andrew Johnson, to organize a loyal government in Tennessee after Grant's advance into the heart of that State. Nor is there any reference to the President's interest in Louisiana. Whatever may be thought of his policy with respect to Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas, there can be no difference of opinion relative to the advantage to the Union cause of the division of Virginia, for the new State of West Virginia, organized in a manner not unworthy the notice of those interested in questions of constitutional interpretation, raised and equipped more than six and thirty regiments for the Federal armies. Other troops for the same cause were enlisted in Arkansas. In East Tennessee the Union sentiment was strong and during the conflict was manifest.

At one time it was much the fashion in the North to criticise Lincoln's plan of reconstruction and to praise that of Congress. The passions of that era having sunk to rest, events are now seen through a different medium. Lincoln's system, with its evident limitations, would have left the affairs of the South largely in the hands of its natural leaders. It was not his plan but one formed chiefly by a fusion of the "State suicide" theory of Sumner and the "conquered province" idea of Stevens that made possible the wild political orgies suggested by the terms carpet-bagger, Ku Klux, White Camelia, negro lawmaker, and legislative store. These institutions of outrage and plunder, together with a legacy of sectional hatred, were among the fruits of the Congressional plan of reconstruction.

The New Nation, the last of the four volumes, by Frederic L. Paxson, is an excellent narrative of the events following the war for Southern independence. The subjects discussed are chiefly economic and social, though there is included a satisfactory treatment of contemporary American politics and a suggestion of their tendencies. Foreign relations have not been overlooked. In fact, brief as is this work little of importance has been omitted. In it one sees nothing to criticise and much to praise. The maps and charts of this as well as of the preceding sections will be found of considerable use to the student, but in this place they cannot be separately described.